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STAT

Aubrey 'Wayne' Nelson, CIA veteran

Aubrey "Wayne" Nelson, 74, a former actor and playwright, retired operations officer of the Central Intelligence Agency and a crossword puzzle composer, died Saturday in Sibley Memorial Hospital. He lived in Bethesda.

Mr. Nelson was born in Philadelphia and was a champion high-school debater in Easton, Pa. He graduated from the Faegin Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York in 1932.

As an actor, he took the stage name of "Wayne" and was known by it ever since. After performing in summer stock and in New York during what he called the "Depression-ridden theater," he turned to script editing and writing plays, one of which was given a professional try-out in New York's Greenwich Village.

He joined Maj. Gen. William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan's Office of the Coordinator of Information in January 1942, serving as confidential assistant to Allen Dulles. He next worked for Office of Strategic Services, the successor to the information office and a predecessor of the CIA.

In the OSS, Mr. Nelson served as confidential assistant to Gen. Donovan in New York and Washington from May until September 1942. He later served overseas with the OSS

in North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and France. He was awarded the Bronze Star and France's La Croix de Guerre with gold star.

After VE-Day, Mr. Nelson was appointed to the staff of the U.S. Reparations Commission and served in Moscow, at the Potsdam Conference, and in Berlin.

He next worked in Hollywood briefly as technical adviser for "13 Rue Madeleine," a picture about the OSS, starring James Cagney.

He also assisted Allen Dulles, who became a director of the CIA, in his book "Germany's Underground."

In 1947-48, serving on a Joint Chiefs of Staff project headed by Kermit Roosevelt, Mr. Nelson wrote the first volume and edited the second of the secret war report of Office of the Coordinator of Information-Office of Strategic Services, which was made public about 30 years later.

Mr. Nelson began working for the CIA in 1949 and served in various operational positions in Washington, Turkey, Greece, South Korea and West Germany. He retired in 1970.

After his retirement he wrote a suspense novel and worked as a freelance editor. He also was a specialist in the origin and history of words and composed a great number of crossword puzzles that were published by The New York Times and Simon and Schuster.



Aubrey "Wayne" Nelson

His latest crossword puzzles, on political and historical subjects, were written for the new American Politics magazine.

Mr. Nelson was a charter member of the American Crossword Federation and Veterans of OSS.

He is survived by his wife, Katherine Nelson, who writes under the name Kay Shaw Nelson, and a daughter, Rae Katherine Nelson of Washington.